

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 15145 161533Z

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9993

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 15145

AID FOR CONSTANTINO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SWEL, IT

SUBJECT: GOI REQUEST FOR COLLABORATION ON GEOPHYSICAL STUDY

1. EMBOFFS MET TODAY WITH PROFESSOR MICHAEL CAPUTO, HEAD OF ITALIAN NATIONAL GEOPHYSICAL INSTITUTE (ING), WHO PROMOTED SEP 15 APPROACH MADE BY MINISTER COSSIGA TO CHARGE.

2. GOI HAS BEEN ABLE TO ASSEMBLE ADDITIONAL SEISMOGRAPHIC STATIONS TO INCREASE MONITORING FOLLOWING SEVERE SEP 15 SHOCKS. POSSIBILITY THAT LATEST TREMORS MAY REPRESENT SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FROM THOSE RECORDED IN MAY 6 EARTHQUAKE MAKES IT LIKELY THAT ADDED EQUIPMENT WILL BE NEEDED ON RAPID EMERGENCY BASIS IN NEAR FUTURE. FOR THE MOMENT THE ING WOULD LIKE ASSURANCES THAT THE U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY COULD PROVIDE SUCH EQUIPMENT BY AIR SHIPMENT ON VERY SHORT NOTICE. AT THAT TIME ACCOMPANYING U.S. SCIENTIFIC PERSONNEL WOULD BE HIGHLY USEFUL. PROFESSOR CAPUTO (WHO HAS HAD LONG TRAINING IN THE U.S.) WOULD SUGGEST NAMES OF SCIENTISTS HE BELIEVES WOULD MAKE STRONGEST CONTRIBUTION. HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED FRANK PRESS AT MIT AS BEST QUALIFIED EITHER TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A VENTURE HIMSELF OR TO HELP SELECT TEAM MEMBERS. EQUIPMENT PROFESSOR CAPUTO SAID WOULD BE CALLED FOR IF NEED ARISES ARE FOUR TO SIX SHORT-PERIOD SEISMOGRAPHIC STATIONS WITH HIGH MAGNIFICATION (50,000 PLUS) TO MONITOR MICRO-SEISMIC LEVELS.

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PAGE 02 ROME 15145 161533Z

3. IN ADDITION IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT THE USGS PROVIDE AS

SOON AS POSSIBLE A GEOPHYSICIST TO WORK WITH THE ING IN ROME IN A LARGELY LIAISON FUNCTION FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. THE LIAISON WOULD NOT ONLY PROVIDE RAPID COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE TWO SERVICES BUT WOULD ESTABLISH A USGS PRESENCE (WITH A BACKGROUND IN LOCAL CONDITIONS) UPON WHICH A LARGER TEAM COULD BE BUILT LATER IF REQUIRED. CAPUTO INDICATED THAT A SOVIET SEISMOLOGIST WAS CURRENTLY WORKING WITH ING AND WOULD BE RETURNING TO THE USSR ON OR ABOUT SEPTEMBER 24. IN CAPUTO'S VIEW (CLEARLY SHARED BY COSSIGA) THERE ARE COGENT POLITICAL ARGUMENTS FOR A FOLLOW-ON AMERICAN PRESENCE. THAT IS A VIEW WE STRONGLY ENDORSE.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT WE ACCEDE TO THE REQUESTS OF THE GOI, PROVIDING FIRST ASSURANCES THAT THE EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL REFERRED TO IN PARA 2 ABOVE WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST (SUBJECT OF COURSE TO THE PRESENTLY UNFORSEEABLE) AND SECOND, THAT USGS OFFER A GEOPHYSICIST (CAPUTO INDICATED "A YOUNG RECENT PHD" TO SERVE WITH ING AS LIAISON WITH USGS AND TO ARRIVE IN ROME AS SOON AFTER SEPTEMBER 24 AS POSSIBLE. BEAUDRY

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